

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 remain present in this application.

The specification and claim 1 have been amended. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Restriction Requirement

It is noted that the present application is the U.S. National Stage of International Application No. PCT/JP03/03506. The Examiner has noted PCT Rules 13.1 and 13.2. Thus, this Examiner appears to be aware that the rules set forth under 37 CFR 1.475 to 1.477 are utilized in determining whether a Restriction Requirement is proper.

As set forth in 37 CFR 1.475(a), an International and the National Stage Application relate to one another. In the prosecution for the International PCT Application, no restriction was issued and all claims were considered in a single application. The same standards should apply in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office examination. It is again respectfully submitted that the claims in the present invention are linked so as to form a general inventive concept. While the Examiner has noted certain differences between the claims, it is still this inventive concept which permeates the different claims of the application. Accordingly, it is again respectfully requested that the requirement given by the Examiner be reconsidered and withdrawn and that all claims be considered in the single application.

Objection to the Claims

The claims stand objected to for an informality. In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this informality has been addressed. Reconsideration and withdrawal of any objection to the claims are respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 USC 102

Claims 1-3 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Takahiko, Japanese document 2001-337221. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The optical film of the present invention is characterized in controlling the z value expressed by " $Z = [\sin^2 2\alpha] \times [\sin^2 (\pi Re/550)]$ " of the thermoplastic resin film comprising the optical film. In the present application, it is necessary to adopt a predetermined production method so that the Z value is made within a predetermined range.

In particular, for controlling the Z value so as to be in the predetermined range, the optical film of the present application is produce by a production method having a step of cooling a molten thermoplastic resin extruded from an extruded machine by making the thermoplastic resin successively circumscribed with a first cooling drum, a second cooling drum, and a third cooling drum. In the cooling step, it is necessary for the thermoplastic resin to be cooled to satisfy conditions (1), (2) and (6), which will be described below but are also described on page 17, line 20 through page 21, line 8 of the originally filed specification.

(1) When assuming that rotation speed of the third cooling drum is R_3 (m/min.) and rotation speed of the second cooling drum is R_2 (m/min.), the ratio of the R_3 and R_2 (R_3/R_2) is made to be 0.990 or more, but less than 0.999, to cool the thermoplastic resin.

(2) When assuming that a resin contact time in the first cooling drum is t_1 (sec.), a temperature when the thermoplastic resin moves away from the first cooling drum is T_{p1} ($^{\circ}\text{C}$), and a glass transition temperature of the thermoplastic resin is T_g ($^{\circ}\text{C}$), $t_1 \times (T_{p1} - T_g)$ (unit: sec. \cdot deg) is made to be -50 or higher and 20 or lower to cool the thermoplastic resin.

6) A temperature difference of the first cooling drum ($T1$) and the second cooling drum ($T2$) is made to be 10 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ or less to cool the thermoplastic resin.

On the other hand, the optical film of Takahiko is obtained with large temperature differences between the first cooling drum ($T1$) and the second cooling drum ($T2$), in which the temperature differences of the drums is 20 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ or more. As evidence thereof and for the Examiner's convenience, an English translation of Table 1 of Takahiko is attached hereto.

The Examiner's attention is further drawn to Comparative Example 1 (referred to as "Example 4" on page 30 of the specification, but amended above), as well as Tables 1 and 2 on pages 33 and 34. In this Comparative Example 1, the temperature difference of the drums is 40 $^{\circ}\text{C}$. Therefore, the optical film of Takahiko cannot satisfy the requirements of the present invention concerning the Z value. In other words, the Z value of Takahiko cannot be 3.4×10^{-5} or less, as is required in independent claim 1.

In the present application, satisfying the conditions of independent claim 1 minimizes and/or eliminates color unevenness of optical film after a durability test. This feature is not found in the prior art utilized by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art utilized by the Examiner fails to teach or suggest the optical film of independent claim 1 and its dependent claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 102(b) rejection are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Because the additional prior art cited by the Examiner has been included merely to show the state of the prior art and has not been utilized to reject the claims, no further comments concerning these documents are considered necessary at this time.

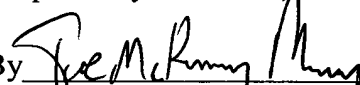
In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants respectfully petition for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of \$120.00 is attached herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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